Medway Council
Planning Committee
Wednesday, 27 August 2025
6.30pm to 8.49pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present:	Councillors: Stamp (Chairperson), Jones (Vice-Chairperson), Field, Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Hamilton, Peake, Pearce and Vye
Substitutes:	Councillors: Brake (Substitute for Etheridge) Fearn (Substitute for Anang) Howcroft-Scott (Substitute for Bowen) Nestorov (Substitute for Myton)
In Attendance:	Councillor Ron Sands (agenda item 6) Julie Francis-Beard, Democratic Services Officer Dave Harris, Chief Planning Officer Peter Hockney, DM Manager Joanna Horne, Lawyer Arron Nicholls, Senior Planner Steven Ward, Highways Consultant

245 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anang, Bowen, Etheridge, Hamandishe and Myton.

246 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 2 July 2025 was agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

247 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

248 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

249 Planning application - MC/25/1049 St. John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School, City Way, Rochester, ME1 2FA

Discussion:

The Service Manager - Development Management outlined the application in detail for the installation of floodlights to the existing 3G sports pitch to allow for all year round use of the facility by both the school and local community groups including amendment to the community usage agreement operating hours from 17:00 to 20:00 on Monday to Fridays, 09:00 to 20:00 on Saturdays and 10:00 to 14:00 on Sundays to 17:00 to 22:00 Monday to Friday during School Term Times and 09:00 to 22:00 Monday to Fridays in School Holidays, 09:00 to 18:00 on Saturday and Sundays.

The Service Manager - Development Management brought Member's attention to the supplementary agenda advice sheet which included additional responses from an existing objector and a response from Sport England.

The Service Manager – Development Management confirmed that the proposed hours were similar to other floodlit pitches within Medway, including Star Meadow in Gillingham and Play Football at The Howard School.

The Committee considered the application noting that there was a big demand for the use of football pitches, especially with the number of girls now playing football. Medway currently had a lack of recreational football pitches and adding a further all weather floodlit pitch here would help to increase residents' physical activity and Members welcomed this.

The Service Manager – Development Management clarified that the amended proposals were for the floodlights to be used until 18:00 on Sundays. He also stated that due to the cost of running floodlights, if no-one was using the pitches the lights would be switched off and he confirmed that an additional condition stating this could be added.

Following a query from a Member, the Chief Planning Officer and Service Manager – Development Management explained that if acoustic barriers were installed it would restrict the adjacent residents open views of the Fields of Fire.

The Service Manager – Development Management confirmed that although Historic England had indicated that the site was located immediately adjacent to Fort Pitt, which was a nationally important scheduled monument, they

assessed the harm would be at the lower end of less than substantial harm and this was balanced against public benefits and the use by the wider community.

Following concerns regarding noise and any breaching of the operating hours, the Chief Planning Officer explained that St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School wanted community engagement and to provide community facilities, if there were any issues raised by residents, the Ward Councillors could speak directly to the Head of the School to ensure those issues would be resolved.

The Service Manager – Development Management confirmed that there would be no light spill near the woodlands which surrounded the pitches and would not affect foraging mammals or bats.

Decision:

Approved with conditions 1 to 4 as set out in the report for the reasons stated in the report with an additional condition to be added ensuring floodlights were turned off when not in use. Final wording to be agreed in consultation with the Chief Planning Officer, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Opposition Spokespersons.

250 Planning application - MC/24/2403 Land to the south of Stoke Road, adjacent to Yew Tree Lodge

Councillor Pearce left the meeting for this item to speak as Ward Councillor.

Discussion:

The Senior Planner outlined the application in detail for the approval of the Reserved Matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of 100 dwellings alongside associated landscape, works and infrastructure, and the discharge of conditions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 18, 20, 23, 24 and 27 in relation to planning permission MC/19/3129.

The Senior Planner brought Member's attention to the supplementary agenda advice sheet which removed condition 4, renumbered the remaining conditions and added a new condition which related to landscape maintenance and management.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Sands addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- Walter Brice Surgery was not a GP surgery, it was a medical centre run by the NHS. There were only two surgeries in Hoo and they were: Elms Medical Practice, next to the Walter Brice Centre and St Werburgh Medical Practice.
- This development would be car reliant as the nearest bus stop and shops were ¾ mile away. Although it could be walked to within 13

minutes, it could take up to 45 mins for others and the footpath on Stoke Road was dangerous.

- Concerns were raised regarding the poor health care facilities in the area. There were only 2 pharmacies in the whole of the Hoo Peninsula. If more houses were built, they would not be able to cope as they were struggling now.
- Hoo St Werbugh and Chattenden Parish Council and Ward Councillors had grave concerns regarding the play area, which they considered was an inferior play area compared to others on the Peninsula. It was of poor quality and the proposed floor treatment was considered dangerous. Young children needed somewhere safe to play.
- Regarding the creation of a new community orchard, it seemed strange that the site that would be built on was the last ancient wood orchard on the Hoo Peninsula.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Pearce addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and raised the following concerns:

- The outline planning application was agreed in 2022, and the reserved matters application was submitted in November 2024 which was just a few weeks before the outline permission expired. The original application was intended to be modular housing; this revised application would provide a better scheme of development.
- Medway Council had not yet carried out a Road Safety Audit of Stoke Road. There were narrow sections of footpath that were not compliant for wheelchair users or prams which did not provide safe walking. This audit should be submitted before the development commenced.
- There were no bus routes on Stoke Road and into the Kingsnorth employment area.
- There were no primary school places for families moving in. They were at full capacity. Increasing the primary school capacity after the houses were approved and built, would mean the residents would have to suffer in the interim.
- An appropriate assessment concerning the impacts on nearby habitats should be submitted as the proposal had the potential to have a harmful effect on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). There could be a negative disturbance from people and the predation of wildlife by pets.

The Committee discussed the planning application noting the concerns outlined by the Ward Councillors and were concerned with the poor condition of the footpaths especially as children would use them to walk to school. The Chief Planning Officer recognised that improvements to the footpaths were required immediately and that in places the verges that ran along Stoke Road restricted pedestrian movement. A S106 contribution of £100,000 had been allocated for the improvement of footpaths and the provision of bridal ways and further discussions need to take place on where that money could be best spent.

The Chief Planning Officer explained, following concerns regarding the play area, that the Play Team had reviewed the play facilities and deemed them to be satisfactory. The floor surfacing could be looked at in more detail and

further discussions could be had with the applicant regarding improving the play areas.

Following concerns regarding the local buses, the Chief Planning Officer stated that there were inadequacies with the bus services in the area. He stated that he was in consultation with employers at Kingsnorth and Arriva Buses on provision of a public bus service that would travel along Stoke Road.

The Senior Planner clarified that Southern Water had a duty to provide water to all new dwellings. An informative had been added for the applicant to liaise with Southern Water. The Chief Planning Officer added that each developer must pay the Water Authority a connection charge for each dwelling to provide and improve the water supply.

The Chief Planning Officer noted that no drainage assessment had been undertaken, however, he was working closely with the Drainage Boards and as there were some flooding issues on the Peninsula, those issues were being taken forward into the Local Plan.

Concerns were raised regarding the health services on the Peninsula and the Chief Planning Officer acknowledged the pressures on the health infrastructure. Conversations took place with the health authorities who continued to explore measures to address the improvements needed in the Peninsula and Strood area, as a priority.

The Chief Planning Officer confirmed that the approved outline planning permission would provide good public rights of way, walkable links to the village and play facilities on site. The development would also provide good measures for moving around the local area without using motorised vehicles. The development would be constructed by a small/medium house builder.

Members discussed the application in front of them was for reserved matters, the outline planning application had already been approved. Members discussed sustainable transport and they requested more investment and infrastructure for buses, cycling and walking. Should this corridor be part of the Medway Local Cycle and Walking Plan? The Chief Planning Officer confirmed that he was working with the Public Transport Team and would discuss this along with bus services and bus stops.

Decision:

Approved with conditions 1 to 7 as set out in the report for the reasons stated in the report with condition 4 being removed and the remaining conditions being renumbered and the inclusion of an additional condition which related to landscape maintenance and management. The Chief Planning Officer would have further discussions with the applicant regarding the safety of the footpaths.

New Condition 7

Landscape maintenance and management

Prior to any handover of the maintenance of the public landscape areas to a management company, there must be a site visit involving the Local Planning Authority, the proposed landscape management company and the developer.

The site visit will include a review of the site area proposed to be transferred to the management company and will assess whether the approved landscape plans had been implemented as approved, the condition and maintenance of all planting and what measures were necessary prior to a handover to the management company. The results of the site visit/walk over shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the agreed requirements in terms of re-planting/maintenance shall be undertaken prior to any hand over to the management company.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and provision for landscaping in accordance with Policies BNE1 and BNE6 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Councillor Pearce returned to the meeting.

251 Planning application - MC/24/1535 Acorn Wharf, Gas House Road, Rochester, Kent ME1 1PJ

Decision:

As there were outstanding matters to be resolved with the Environment Agency it was recommended that that this planning application be withdrawn from the meeting and reported at a future Planning Committee meeting.

252 Performance Report 1 April to 30 June 2025

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out performance for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025.

The Chief Planning Officer drew Members' attention to a number of compliments which had been received and were set out on pages 109 to 110 of the report.

Members extended their thanks to the Chief Planning Officer and his team for all their hard work and acknowledged the amount of work that went into producing the results shown in the report.

The Service Manager – Development Management explained that enforcement action took a very long time from start to completion. The Chief Planning Officer stated that their aim was to resolve a breach, to work with the applicant

and support them to resolve the issue. Some enforcement issues were resolved very quickly, if someone innocently did something wrong, however, others could take a lot longer. Due to the Planning Inspectorate's lack of staff, the Chief Planning Officer was working with the local MPs to help get the resources required so the Planning Inspectorate could speed up the process.

When asked what the Chief Planning Officer did when he received any compliments regarding his officers, he stated that firstly he would thank the officer involved and show them the compliment he had received and he would also make sure his Assistant Director, Director and Chief Executive were advised of the compliment and they would all go back to the officer to give their thanks. He said that he had a relatively low turnover of staff, if officers did leave, they left for the right reasons normally for job progression.

Members of the Planning Committee would receive Medway Council's response to the Government's proposals to modernise planning committees.

Members acknowledged the good work that the BOPS (back-office planning system) had provided.

Following a question regarding how sustainable and cost effective it was to use consultants, the Chief Planning Officer explained that he would prefer not to use consultants, however, he was in a fortunate position where his officers were incredibly experienced, and he had a low turnover of staff and so he didn't have to use many consultants. He clarified that the team had gone through a restructure about a year ago and management had tried to create a structure which gave staff the opportunity for internal promotion.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Chief Planning Officer express the Committee's appreciation for the levels of achievement to staff within the Planning Service.

253 Appeal Decision 1 April to 30 June 2025

Discussion:

The Chief Planning Officer gave a summary of the appeal decisions referred to in appendix A to the report.

Regarding MC/24/1038 M2 Commuter Car Park, Maidstone Road, Rainham, the Chief Planning Officer made it clear that the appeal had been determined on its planning merits and that the ownership of the site by Medway Council was a separate matter from Planning for the Council to consider. The Chief Planning Officer explained that the Planning Inspectorate considered the additional structures that were appearing were due to the fact that the Travellers had no certainty of staying there. By granting approval and it being allowed at appeal, a condition was imposed on how they would deal with and

de-clutter the site. If further planning applications were submitted, Medway Council would consider them on their own merits.

Regarding TPA/23/1378 23 Hawbeck Road, Parkwood the Chief Planning Officer explained why the Inspector had allowed the appeal to fell the tree and why a replacement tree condition had not been imposed in this instance.

Regarding MC/22/1867 Land east of Rainham Pumping Station and north of Lower Rainham Road, the Chief Planning Officer explained that the application was to construct two residential properties. Although the officers' recommendation was to approve, the Planning Committee determined that access to those two properties, so close to a chicane, would impact highway safety and refused the application. The Planning Inspectorate took the view that Members did not have any technical evidence to prove this. In hindsight, this planning application should have been deferred for highways to evaluate accident records for that road.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

254 Section 106 Agreements April to June 2025

Discussion:

The Chief Planning Officer gave a summary of the amount of S106 funding received and agreements signed from April to June 2025 and referred to decisions referred to in appendix 1 to the report.

The Chief Planning Officer explained the process of allocating S106 funding and that it could be many years from the planning application submission to the funding being provided and residents do not always associate that particular contribution with that development. He acknowledged there were things that could be changed, such as providing an annual report and to ensure that when developments were delivered, the Planning Team communicated this to local residents. The Chief Planning Office was working with health authorities to get assurances that improvements would be made to the health provisions.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

255 Medway Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

Discussion:

The Chief Planning Officer discussed the report in detail and explained that Members received this report, annually.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

Chairperson

Date:

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